

144.  
A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the Funeral of  
*Mr. Samuel Lawrence,*  
Minister of the Gospel at  
*Nantwich in Cheshire.*

Who Died there, *April 24. 1712.* in the  
51st Year of his Age, and was Buried  
*April 28.*

To which is added a short Account of his Life.

---

By *MATTHEW HENRY,*  
Minister of the Gospel. *X*

---

L O N D O N:

Printed for *J. Lawrence* in the Poultry, *R. Robinson*  
in *St. Paul's Church-yard*, and *N. Cliff*, and *D.*  
*Jackson* in *Cheapside* near *Mercers-Chapel*, 1712.

Price 6 d.

283.

W. Musgrave.



A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the Funeral of

Mr. *Samuel Lawrence.*

PHIL. II. xxvii.

— *Lest I should have Sorrow upon Sorrow.*

**O** That the *Occasion* of our *Meeting* here to Day had been *such*, as that this *whole Verse* had been *applicable* to it! If when our *Dear Brother*, (whose *Remains* we have just now laid in the silent Grave) was *sick nigh unto Death*, God had heard our Prayers, had seen our Tears, had order'd the *Sun of Life* to go back; or rather, the *Shadow* of it, (for it is but a Shadow) and had added to his Days, as to *Hezekiah's*, and we had been met here to return Thanks for his Recovery, with what Pleasure should I have applied this whole Verse to such a joyful Occasion; For indeed he was *sick, nigh unto Death*, but God had Mercy on him, and spar'd him, and not on him only, but on me also, and on you likewise, and on many others, *lest we should have Sorrow upon Sorrow.*

# *A Sermon Preach'd at the Funeral*

2 Sam.  
12. 18.  
1 Sam.  
14. 45.

Psal. 126.  
5, 6.  
1 Cor. 15.  
42.

But alas, this is *not our Case*; it is not a *Song of Praise* that is this Day put into our Mouths, but a *Song of Lamentation*; nor is the Case any longer within reach of *Prayer*; while our Friend was *yet alive* we *wept* and made *Supplication*, for we said, *who can tell but God will yet be gracious to us, and he shall live?* We pleaded, *Shall Jonathan die*, who has been instrumental of so much Good to the Souls of many, who is such a Blessing to *Israel*, and likely to be more so, likely in a Course of Nature to be long so? *But now he is Dead*, tho' we desire patiently to submit to the Holy Will of God, and to *reconcile our selves* to this dark Dispensation, acknowledging that God is *just* in this which he hath brought upon us, yet we think we may have Liberty to *bemoan our selves*, under so sore a Breach made upon our Comforts; nay, we think it is our Duty, when we sow *such precious Seed*, sow it in *Corruption*, and *Dishonour*, tho' we believe it shall be raised again in *Glory* and *Incorruption*, yet to *bear it forth weeping*, and to sow it in *Tears*. If *Jonathan* be fallen, we cannot but say we are distressed for him, for very pleasant has he been unto us, and therefore very painful must it needs be to have him thus suddenly *rent from us*, in the midst of his great Usefulness.

We have occasion then at present to make use only of the last Words of the Verse, *Sorrow upon Sorrow*. That which *Paul* dreaded, but it was by the Mercy of God prevented, in the Case of *Epaphroditus*, we feel, we have, I am sure I feel, I have, *Sorrow upon Sorrow*, a Complication, an Addition of Sorrows, which ought to be no surprize to us in this *Vale of Tears*, this lower Region, where the *Clouds return after the Rain*; in a World where we are bid to expect *Tribulation*, and to count upon it.

Our Observation from the Text, with Application to the present sad Occasion, tho' it be only implied, yet riseth easily and naturally; if *Epaphroditus* had dy'd, *Paul* who was now already in Great Distress, by reason of his Removal and Distance from his Friends at *Philippi*, would have had *Sorrow upon Sorrow*; the

*Sorrow*



of Mr. Samuel Lawrence.

Sorrow of burying one Friend, upon the Sorrow of being separated from many more; and therefore when such a one as *Epaphroditus* was, is removed from us by Death, we have Sorrow upon Sorrow; i. e. we have Great Sorrow, many Sorrows included in this One; and sometimes Providence so orders the Circumstances of this Affliction, that it is to those who are nearly interested in the Case, (as *Paul* was in that of *Epaphroditus*) one Sorrow added to another, like *Job's* Messengers; as the Waves of the Sea; Deep calling unto Deep. Broken with Breach upon Breach.

To accommodate this to our present Purpose, we must consider who this *Epaphroditus* was, whose Death would have been so great a Grief to *St. Paul*. He was an *Evangelist*; not only in the larger Signification of the Word, a Preacher of the Gospel, a Bringer of Good Tidings, but in its more peculiar Sense, He was an Assistant to the Apostles in founding and planting Churches, such was *Timothy*, *Titus*, *Silas*, and others, who were sometimes the Apostles Companions and Associates in their Itinerant Work, sometimes their Substitutes and Agents; whom they sent where they could not come, or left where they could not stay, to set in order the Things that were wanting; to settle the Churches which the Apostles had planted under the Conduct of their ordinary Pastors and Teachers, and then to leave them. This *Epaphroditus* is the same with that *Epaphras*, who first preach'd the Gospel at *Colosse*, and planted a Church there; afterwards was for some time at *Philippi*, and water'd the Church there; and was now at *Rome*, sent thither by the *Philippians* on an Errand to *St. Paul*, and sent back by *St. Paul* to them with this Epistle.

Tit. i. 5.

Col. i. 7.

Now we may look upon this good Man,

1. As a Dear Friend of *Paul's*, and one whom he had a great Love and Value for. He calls him here, v. 25. His Brother and Companion in Labour, and his Fellow-soldier; and Col. i. 7. his Dear Fellow-servant. *St. Paul* was the Chief of the Apostles, excell'd them all in Gifts and Graces, and Usefulness, was a Prime Minister,

## A Sermon Preach'd at the Funeral

1 Cor. 12. Brethren's Help, and to be *thankful* for it, to see the Advantage we have by it for the strengthening of our Hands, and the carrying on of our Work, and to see what *Losers* we are by their Removal; nay we are ignorant of our selves, if we *esteem* not others better than our selves, and reckon not that we could be better spared.

Paul calls *Epaphroditus* his Brother, for all we are Brethren; all true Christians, all faithful Ministers are so, for they have all one and the same Father, and all belong to one and the same Family. He calls him his Companion in Labour, for he was engag'd in the same Work; and his Fellow-Soldier, for he was engag'd in the same Warfare; and the Share he had with him in Services and Sufferings increas'd Paul's Affection to him; if he be his Fellow-Servant, and be such a one as he should be, he is a dear Fellow-Servant, Paul's Heart is upon him, and he loves him as his own Soul. It becomes the Servants of Jesus Christ, not only to love their Master, but to love their Fellow-Servants, to call them their dear Fellow-Servants, not jealous of their Rivalship, or envious at their Success, but taking Pleasure in them and their Prosperity. Fellow-Soldiers that have ventur'd their Lives together, should thereby have their Hearts knit together. *Epaphroditus* was upon this account dear to Paul, who therefore could scarce bear the Thoughts of parting with him.

2. As a faithful Servant to the Churches, whose Care was not confin'd to one Church, but was extended to many; he laid out himself to promote every thing that was good among Christians; He is your Messenger, one that you have employ'd, and put a Confidence in, one that you have made your Representative, that manageth the Affairs of your Church so wisely, so well. *Epaphroditus*, as it should seem, was now sent by the  
Phi-

## of Mr. Samuel Lawrence.

*Philippians* to Rome to attend *Paul*, to see what he wanted, and to bring him some Supplies which they had collected for him.

This was he that was *sick, nigh unto Death*, and if he had dy'd, it would have been an Occasion of great Sorrow to *Paul*, for tho' *Paul* was a Man that had the Command of his Passions, yet he was not a Stock or a Stone, or a *Stoick* void of Passion; our Lord Jesus himself was not; because he lov'd *Lazarus*, he *wept* over *John 11.* his Grave, and hath warrant'd us to do so. And here 35, 36. we have occasion for it. Tho' we pretend not to compare our Friends and Fellow-Servants with, yet we hope we may compare them to *St. Paul's* Friends and Fellow-Servants; they walk (tho' not *passibus aequis*) in the same Spirit, and in the same Steps, and therefore we ought to be in like manner affected with their Removal.

*Doct.* The Death of Faithful Ministers is just Cause for Sorrow, and sometimes especially it is so circumstanc'd, as that it becomes Sorrow upon Sorrow.

1. The Death of Faithful Ministers is just Cause for Sorrow. Parting with them is a very mournful thing, yea, tho' they have continued long in their Usefulness, and some may think it's time they should go off to make room for others, yet in that Case their Death is to be lamented, as *Elisha's* was by the King of *Israel*, tho' he *2 Kings* was then very old, and we had heard nothing of him a 13, 14. great while; and we must thus shew that we have esteem'd them highly in Love for their Work's sake. Yea *Phil. 2. 17* tho' they should die Martyrs, and should themselves rejoyce to be offer'd up, yet in that Case, as in *Stephen's*, devout Men will make great Lamentation for them; *Acts 8. 2* much more is it to be lamented when there is not that Gain to the Church by their Deaths, and might long have been in all Probability great Gain to the Church by their Lives. It is justly reckon'd an Argument of great Stupidity, if when such Men are taken away we do not consider it, and lay it to Heart. Observe, *Isa. 57. 1*

## A Sermon Preach'd at the Funeral

1. Ministers, Faithful Ministers are subject to the Stroke of Death as well as others. They *know* themselves, and we know that they must certainly and *shortly put off this their Tabernacle; Our Fathers where are they? and the Prophets, do they live for ever?* We see they do not.

They are not *exempted* from Death, for the Treasure is put into *Earthen Vessels*; they also are *form'd out of the Clay*, tho' they are to us in *God's Stead*, and they must *return to their Dust*; they are indeed call'd the *Angels* of the Churches, such is the Dignity of their Office, but alas we find them mortal dying Men; and when they are *subject to like Passions* as others, it is not strange they are subject to like Strokes as others; the *Law made Men Priests*, and the Gospel makes Men Ministers, that *had Infirmary*, and therefore *could not continue*, could not continue long, *by reason of Death*, which must be and will be where Sin is.

Nay, they are *expos'd* more than others; *Death is working in them*, when *Life in you*; their Work waits them, their Sorrows wear them; and they gladly *spend*, and cannot but be *spent* for you. A wicked World is ready to say, Away with them, they are *not worthy to live*; a gracious God saith, Away with them, the ungrateful World is *not worthy of them*; so that the Point seems to be agreed, that good Men must not live long in this World.

2. Death is the Occasion of Grief; ordinarily it is so; when *Man goes to his long Home* the Mourners go *about the Streets*. The House where Death is, is call'd the *House of Mourning*; It is so unless either those that are remov'd *were*, or those that are left behind *are*, void of natural Affection. There was a great Cry throughout *Egypt*, when *there was not a House in which there was not one dead*. 'Tis Death reigning in this World as it doth, that makes it a *Vale of Tears*; in Heaven, and there only, where there is *no more Death*, all Tears are *wiped away* from Mens Eyes.

3. The Death of good Ministers ought to be in a special Manner mourn'd for; this is a Lamentation, and



and shall be for a Lamentation, as much as any Death. *Moses, and Aaron, and Samuel, were Men that all Israel went into real Mourning for. The Death of Ministers makes God's House a House of Mourning, and sensibly affects those who are sorrowful for the Syn- Zeph. 3. 18. lemm Assembly, to whom the Reproach of it is a Burthen; then the Ways of Zion mourn, when the Guides and Overseers in those Ways are remov'd; then her Elders put on Sackcloth, when those that were the Ornaments of the Elders Seat are remov'd.*

1. It is Matter of Sorrow to the People; they were the Messengers of the Churches, God's Messengers to 2 Cor. 8. 23. them by the Word; Messengers of good Tidings, whose Feet upon that account were beautiful; they were their Messengers to God by Prayer, that many a time went to the Throne of Grace on their Errands, spread their Case before the Lord, and made Intercession for them, and in both were Helpers of their Joy; they were Interpreters; now the Removal of such ought to be sadly lamented, because it breaks in upon the Intercourse we have with Heaven, the keeping up of which is so much our Business, and so much our Bliss in our present State.

When these Messengers are called away by Death, you ought to be afflicted, and mourn and weep.

1. Because of the Love which we hope you bare to them, that you may testify and express that. They lov'd you, and travel'd in Birth again for you, till they Gal. 4. 19. saw some good Evidence of Christ's being formed in you; you know how they exhorted and comforted, and 1 Thes. 2. 11. charged every one of you, as a Father doth his Children; how near their Hearts your spiritual Welfare lay, what a Grief it was to them when any of you walked disorderly, and how much your well-doing was their Joy; you have perceiv'd what a tender Concern they have had for you, *who is weak and I am not weak?* What a Fear they have been in concerning you, lest you should come short, lest you should seem to come short; many have been the Proofs of their Love to you, and it may be your own Hearts tell you, that while they

*A Sermon Preach'd at the Funeral*

they were *with you* you gave them not the Proofs you should have given them of *your Love to them*, you were wanting in your Duty; you did not attend on their Ministry so *constantly*, nor attend to it so *carefully* as you should have done; your profiting did not appear, but the contrary, and this *griev'd* the Hearts of those who should have had *Joy of you*; will you testify your Love to them now they are gone, by bewailing the Removal of them? Thus *at length* shew the Value you had for them, and make up what has been wanting in the Instances of your Love to them. Let their Deaths be *lamented*, to shew that their Lives were *desir'd*.

2. Because of the *Loss* which you know you *have of them*, and not you only, but others also; for their Usefulness is extensive, and their Lives a Blessing to *many*. The Loss of a faithful Minister is a *publick Loss*; we are to reckon those our *best Friends* that are our *Soul's Friends*, and therefore the Loss of *such Friends*, the greatest Loss of that kind.

You here have lost one that long approv'd himself a skilful faithful Friend to *your Souls*; one that was excellently well qualified for the Service of your Faith, and the Help and Furtherance of your Holiness and Joy; he was one that knew how to *divide the Word of Truth* aright, and to give each of you *your Portion of Meat in due Season*. He was one, that to my Knowledge in his Youth, laid in a good Stock of useful Learning, and which is more, knew how to *make use of it*. He was a Scribe *well instructed into the Kingdom of Heaven*, and could bring out of his Treasury *Things new and old*, for the Improvement of the most grown Christians, and yet both in his Preaching and in his Converse, knew how to *condescend and accommodate* himself to the Capacity of the *Meaneſt*; to feed the *Babes with Milk*, and the grown Men with *strong Meat*. He preach'd to you in a *Method*, that you might see the Truths you are to believe, and the Duties you are to do in *their Order*, and their Reference to each other, which will render the one more *intelligible*, and the other more *practicable*. He preach'd

of Mr. Samuel Lawrence.

11

to you in his Conversation, which was of a Piece with his Doctrine; he was an *Example to the Believers* in every thing that is Praise-worthy, and was both a *burning and a shining Light*. That which he aim'd at was your Profit, as one that *naturally car'd for your State*.

O that you would *sorrow after a godly sort*, would sorrow according to God, and with an eye to him for the Death of one that was so much your Helper in the Things of God; that you would sorrow for the Loss your poor Children sustain by his Death, the *Lambs of your Flock*, whom he fed with Food convenient for them; in his publick Catechizing. I trust there are many of you to whom he was through Grace a *Spiritual Father*, who by his Ministry were brought savingly to Christ, such have reason to lament the taking away of one quite out of their Reach, with whom they might have consulted concerning their Progress in the Way to Heaven, but whom they can now not only not hear, but not hear from. But especially, O that you would *sorrow for your Sins*, your Carelessness and Unfruitfulness under his Ministry, which hath separated between you and your Minister, and has provoked God to deprive you of such a Privilege. All our Tears should be turn'd into this Chancel.

2. It is Matter of Sorrow to us that are Ministers; for they were our Companions, our *Fellow-Servants*, that laboured with us in the same Work; our *Fellow-Soldiers* that expos'd themselves with us in the same Warfare. Tho' St. Paul had as little need of Help as any Minister ever had, tho' the Holy Ghost was given by his Hands, so that if one was removed, he knew which way to expect the raising up of another; yet the Death of a faithful Minister was very much his Sorrow; and much more reason there is why it should be ours.

1. We have cause for it. Our Hands are this Day weak through our own Infirmities, and they are weaken'd by such Providences, so that the Work is either not done, or not so well done; we are dis-

## A Sermon Preach'd at the Funeral

hearten'd, and discourag'd, and drive heavily when thus our *Chariot Wheels* are taken off. We need Help, we need *such* Help, and at every turn shall find the Want of it, and reflect with Sorrow upon the withering of such a Hand, as was so much our *Right Hand*.

Much is requir'd to make an *able Minister of the New Testament*, abundance of Gifts and Graces, Study and Experience, a good Head, and a good Heart; it is long e're a Minister grows up to Maturity, the choicest Fruits ripen slowly; many hopeful Buds and Blossoms are blasted, and those that promis'd fair disappoint us, and never bring forth Fruit to Perfection; many are pluck'd off by Death, while they are yet in the Blossom, they *come forth like a Flower*, and are cut down, in the Beginning of their Usefulness; and therefore to be depriv'd of such a one as we have now lost, that was beginning, and but beginning to be an *Elder in Age*, as well as an *Elder in Office*, that was grown by Observation and Experience fit to be a *Father to the Sons of the Prophets*, and a very wise and tender One he was, and thereby to strengthen the Hands of his Brethren, that was a great Example of Humility, Considerateness, and Conscientiousness, *this is a Lamentation, and shall be for a Lamentation*, especially when (according to the Reason there given) among all the Branches of our Vine there are so few that are *strong Rods for Sceptres to rule*.

Ezek. 19.  
14.

Let the *Priests the Lord's Ministers* mourn between the Temple and the Altar, for there, in the Courts of the Lord's House they will find a Loss of him that was so good a Helper with them in the Service of the Tabernacle. We have lost one that *labour'd in the Word and Doctrine*, and ought therefore to be accounted *worthy of double Honour*, of Honour while he liv'd, the Honour of being *belov'd*; and of Honour at his Death, the Honour of being lamented.

2. *It will do us good*. It will be for our spiritual Benefit, not only to admit but to enforce the Impressions of Sorrow upon this Occasion. By the Sadness



Lives may be made better, and we may have reason to say, *It was good for us to go to such a House of Mourning*, tho' it is bad for us, that such Houses of Mourning are made among us. That which makes so much against us, if we be duly affected with it, may by the Grace of God be made to work for us; *out of the Easter may come forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness;* we whose Business it is to teach others to improve such Providences, are our selves inexcusable, if we do not *lay them to Heart*, as *the Living* are concern'd to do.

If we sorrow aright for the Death of our Brethren, it will help to *fix upon our Minds that seriousness* which is so necessary to every Christian, and especially to a Minister, and to mortifie that Lightness and Airyness which very much disfits for the Employments and Enjoyments of the Spiritual and Divine Life. This *Sadness* will help to *compose* our vain Minds, and dispose them for *serious Work*, and to preserve that *Decorum* upon our whole Behaviour which becomes our Profession, and will contribute so much to the great Ends of it. That really doth us good which helps to make us *Grave*, and *sober-minded*, and our Spirits are wretchedly *dissipated* if *this* will not do it.

It will stir us up to *double our Diligence in our Master's Work*; do we grieve for the loss of them that are remov'd? Let us endeavour in some measure to *make up the loss* by laying out our selves so much the more in the Service of Christ, and the Souls of Men; let us *Pray* better, and *Preach* better, and *Live* better, that we may each of us do something towards filling up the Gap. In Two Scriptures we find the Consideration of this, that Death is a Period to the Usefulness of good Men in this World, urg'd as an Argument with the Survivors to abound so much the more in honouring God; one is *Psalms 115. 17, 18. The Dead praise not the Lord*, as they did while they were alive, *neither any that go down into Silence. Praying, Praising, Preaching Lips are clos'd in the Grave, but we* *praise the Lord. Because they cannot do it, we will do*

## A Sermon Preach'd at the Funeral

do it the more fervently, the more constantly, and will endeavour that it may be done by a Seed, by a Succession of Saints, when we also are gone, *from this Time forth and for evermore*; the other is in *Hezekiah's Writing, Isa. 38. 18, 19. The Grave cannot praise thee, as the Pulpit doth, Death cannot celebrate thee, nor the Congregation of the Dead, as the Assembly of God's Israel doth: And therefore the Living, the Living they shall praise thee, with so much the more, Life and Liveliness; and that the Work may not sink and die in our Hands, the Fathers to the Children shall make known thy Truth, that they may be praising God on Earth, when we are praising him in Heaven.*

It will put us in mind of our latter End, of the Period that will then be put to our Work, and the Account that must then be given up of it. They are gone and we are going, and we know not whose turn it will be to go next; probably ours that were nearest in Age, who therefore are the more concern'd to take the Alarm. When our Fathers are removed in a full Age, we are perhaps tempted to think 'twill be many Years before it comes to our turn to be gather'd to them, and so to think of Death as a thing at a Distance; but when our Brethren are remov'd, those that were brought up with us, and are of the same standing, we are bid to think of Dying, not only as certain, but as very near; Behold the Judge standeth before the Door; this forbids us to say in our Hearts, *Our Lord delays his coming*, and speaks aloud in our Ears that *the Lord is at Hand*, Moses and Aaron are much of an Age, there's but three Years between them, and therefore when Aaron is dead, God puts Moses in Mind of following him quickly: *Thou also shalt be gathered unto thy People, as Aaron thy Brother was gather'd.* You commonly say to those that are but a very little younger than you, *When I die for Age, you must quake for fear*; yet if you have made sure your Interest in Christ, you will see cause not to quake for fear, but to sing for Joy; but when those of the same Age with us die, tho' not for Age, 'tis a call to us to think of dying, of dying shortly. Why may not

Numb.  
27. 13.

not our Strength be weaken'd in the way, and our Days shorten'd, as their's were? And the Number of our Months be cut off in the midst. O that this Consideration might be so impress'd upon us that are Ministers, that we might by it be quicken'd and engag'd to apply our selves more closely and vigorously to our great Business, that we may finish comfortably and well. Our Blessed Lord stirr'd up himself with this Consideration, *I must work the works of him that sent me while it is Day, for the Night cometh when no Man can work.* John 9. 4. The nearer our Time draws to an end, the more concern'd we are to fill it up with Duty, and with that which will turn to a good Account, that we may give up our account with Joy. And if thus we sow in these Tears, the Harvest hereafter will be pleasant; if the good Lessons which these Providences teach us be taken out and well learn'd, we shall have reason to say, that Sorrow is better than Laughter; and that our Loss is not only their Gain, but our Gain too. Our Dear Brother being dead yet speaketh, thus speaketh, Therefore be ye also ready, and in order to that be ye also Buisie, be always abounding in the Lord. We have no Time to lose, who have so much work to go through, and have lost so much Time already. Let us not under colour of prolonging our Lives indulge our ease, lest by so saving our Lives we lose them: The more uncertain Life is, the more need we have to spend it well, for that's the way to end it well; and blessed is that Servant whom his Lord when he comes shall find so doing.

2. Sometimes the Death of faithful Ministers is so circumstanc'd, that it is Sorrow upon Sorrow; that was the thing St. Paul dreaded in the Death of Epaphroditus, and it is what we feel at this time. God reneweth his Witnesses against us, and multiplies our wounds.

1. When many Breaches of this kind are made upon us about the same time, then we have Sorrow upon Sorrow. Death is always reigning in every Place, and every Week brings in its Bills of Mortality, but we reckon it a sore and signal Judgment, if an Epidemical Distem-

## A Sermon Preach'd at the Funeral

Distemper makes the Numbers of the Dead in a little Time more than usual; it is true, the *Prophets do not live for ever*, the Labourers must be call'd out of the Vineyard, when they shall have *accomplish'd as a Hireling their Day*. But when *many* are remov'd in a *little Time* in the same Country, and those most of them in the midst of their Days, and Usefulness, we must

Mr. Cope of Haslington in 1704. Mr. Chorlton of Manchester, 1705. Mr. Latham of Wem, and Mr. Owen of Salop, Mr. Holland of Lofstock, Mr. Long of Wrexham, in 1706. Mr. Talents, and Dr. Benyon, both of Salop, and Mr. Jonathan Harvy of Chester, 1708. Mr. Low of Knutsford, and Mr. Evans of Oswestry, in 1709. Mr. Nailor of St. Ellens, 1710. Dr. Peyton of Stafford, Mr. Brian of Newcastle, Mr. Jenkin Thomas of Wrexham, and Mr. Eaton of Manchester, in 1711. and now Mr. Lawrence in 1712.

be very stupid, if we hear not the Voice of God in it; I can name about Seventeen Dissenting Ministers here within our Neighbourhood, and Acquaintance, that have been removed in little more than Seven Years, many of them I have done this mournful Office for, that I am now doing for this Dear Brother of mine, and of them all only two that (as I think) were above 55 Years Old, and those Two were considerably above 80, Mr. Talents and Mr. Cope; 6 or 7 I take to have been about 50, and the rest under 40. And is not this Sorrow upon Sorrow? Have not the Deaths of our Brethren in the Ministry been brought us by *Job's* Messengers? *While one is yet speaking*, comes in another.

And what shall we say to these things? What is this that God has done unto us? What is it that God would have us to-do? What is it that he saith to us by these repeated strokes of the same Rod, what's the meaning of it? And what the mind of *him that has appointed it*?

1. God doth hereby plainly *reprove us* for our former *Stupidity* and *Senselessness*, under the Breaches of this kind that were made upon us; good Men, good Ministers have been taken from us, and we have not *consider'd it*, and *laid it to Heart* as we ought to have done; and therefore God has proceeded in this Controversie with us, for *when he judgeth he will overcome*,  
will



will humble the unhumbl'd. If the Work be not done, and the Point gain'd by one Affliction, another may reasonably be expected. *Lord, when thy Hand is lifted up, they will not see, but they shall see.* Isa. 26.11. When one good Minister has been taken away, perhaps we have been tempted to think, the Matter is not great, there's *more enow*: But God will make us know that we have *none to spare*, and that if we depend upon our Numbers he can soon lessen them.

We have not been duly affected with the losses of this kind which *other Congregations* have sustain'd, as if we were not *concern'd* in them, nor were in danger of the like; as if our *Mountain stood so strong* that it could not be *moved*, and we have thereby provoked God to come nearer us, and to make us *feel the smart* of that *Rod* upon *our own Back*, which we have not *heard the Voice* of upon the Back of others. 'Tis a Method God takes in other Afflictions, those must be made to *suffer*, that will not be made to *sympathize*; for sooner or later, one way or other, God will be *heard*, he will be *heeded*.

2. God doth hereby plainly *warn us* of Judgments coming. We are to look upon it, as a *sad Token of his Displeasure* against us; nay, if we make not a right Improvement of it, 'tis well if it prove not a *bad Omen of his Departure* from us. The removal of so many Candles out of their Places, is a step towards, and a Threatning of the removal of the Candlestick it self out of its place; which we have *deserv'd*, because we have *left our first Love*, and have not *repented and done our first Works*. God designs by these Providences to awaken us out of our Security, that we may not flatter our selves with a Conceit, that *to Morrow will be as this Day*; and to stir us up to our Duty, which is to *prepare to meet our God*; to stand in the Gap which is hereby made, and *make good the Breach* against the Judgments which threaten by it to pour in upon us.

*Hear ye the Lord's Controversie*, which he has with Mic. 6. 2; his People, and which *he will plead*; *Hear ye the Lord's Voice*, crying to the City, to the Country, and

Ch. 7. 2.  
v. 1.

Psal. 12. 1.

see his Name in it. Why? How doth it appear that God is contending with us? The Prophet gives you an Instance of it soon after, *The good Man is perished out of the Earth, and I am as when they have gather'd the Summer fruits.* Stript of all my Glory; what is to be said at such a Time? We must not only say as the Prophet there, *Wo is me!* But as the Psalmist on the like occasion, *Help Lord, for the godly Man ceaseth, the Faithful fail;* when we are bemoaning our Losses, we must apply our selves to him, who is alone able to make them up; when godly, faithful People cease and fail, 'tis high Time to cry, *Help Lord.*

Jer. 48. 11.

Let the good Impressions of such Providences as these abide with us, and let them not wear off; we are apt to be affected with them for the present, but we soon forget them, and settle upon our Lees again, as those that having been at ease from our Youth, are desirous still to be so, which makes it necessary, that God in his Providence should be still emptying us from Vessel to Vessel, shifting Hands with us, for otherwise our Taste remaineth in us, and our Scent is not changed. Let us take heed lest by returning to our former Security, we provoke God to proceed in his Controversie; but by daily Prayers to God, let us endeavour to turn away his Wrath, and by a continual good Improvement of the many Breaches of this Kind that have been made upon us, let us stand between the living Ministers and the dead, that this Plague may be staid. O

Isa. 37. 4.

lift up a Prayer for the Remnant that is left, an earnest Prayer that God would not make a full end, but would spare his People, and spare his Ministers to them, according to the Multitude of his Mercies.

2. When we have this Sorrow mingled with other Sorrows, when Grief for the Death of our Ministers is added to other Grievances, so that there is a Complication of Grievs, then we have Sorrow upon Sorrow. This would have been Paul's Case if Epaphroditus had dy'd; he was now in Sorrow, not so much for his own Sufferings, he knew how to Glory and Rejoice in them, but because he was absent from the Philippians, and others

others of his Friends that were dear to him, and wanted to know *their State*; and especially, because he saw a general Decay of serious Godliness among Ministers and Christians; *some preach Christ of Envy and Strife, and all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's*; This was Paul's Sorrow, and if now he had lost Epaphroditus, one that preach'd Christ out of Love to him, and that naturally car'd for the State of Souls, it would have been *Sorrow upon Sorrow*; and this also is our Case.

Phil. 1.

15.

—2. 21.

How far my own present Grief which lies heavy upon me, beyond what I could have thought, directed my Thoughts upon this sad Occasion to this melancholy Theme of *Sorrow upon Sorrow*, I shall not say, the Heart best knows its own Bitterness, and feels most from its own Burthen; but upon many Accounts of common Concern, we may truly call this *Sorrow upon Sorrow*.

1. The *abounding of Atheism and Infidelity, Vice and Prophaneness* in our Land is our Sorrow; we behold the *Transgressours* and are grieved; I am sure we ought to be so; to see them so numerous, so impudent; *Rivers of Tears* should run down our Eyes, because there are so few that keep God's Law, so many that break it. The general Corruption of Mens Principles and Manners, the *abounding of Impiety and Immorality*, and the *Inefficacy of the Endeavours us'd for Reformation*, are matter of Sorrow to all good People; *righteous Souls* are vex'd from Day to Day, as Lot's was with the *filthy Conversation* of the unrighteous; and we hope there is a Remnant that *mourn in Secret*, and cover their Faces for that wickedness which is committed openly, and goes bare-faced; that sigh and cry for the *Abominations of the Land*; that blush before God for that wickedness for which they that are guilty of it will not blush before Men. 'Tis sad to see, to hear how God's Name is profan'd, his Law broken, his Word vilified, his Sabbaths polluted, his Creatures abus'd, how Men wrong and abuse, how they bite and devour one another.

Psal. 119.

136.

## A Sermon Preach'd at the Funeral

And if this be a *Sorrow*, as certainly it is, the taking away of those from the midst of us, that were in their Places God's *Witnesses* against the wickedness of the *Wicked*, that help'd to put Vice out of Countenance, and to make *Iniquity* stop her *Mouth*; that by the *Spirit of the Lord* lifted up a *Standard* against this *Enemy* that comes in like a *Flood*; the silencing of the faithful *Watchmen*, that warn'd the *Wicked* in God's Name to turn from his wicked Way, must needs be *Sorrow upon Sorrow*. Men of Probity and Sincerity could never be worse spar'd than now, when Men *speak Vanity every one to his Neighbour*, and there are so few that can be confided in.

2. The *Decay of serious Piety* among those that make a Profession of it is *our Sorrow*; it may justly grieve us to see not only how *Iniquity* abounds, but how the *Love of many waxeth cold*; Love to their God, to their Bibles, to their Brethren, devout Affections ebb and abate: the *Kindness of our Youth* is forgotten, and that of our *Esponsals*; 'tis our *Sorrow*, to see so little of the *Power of Godliness* among those that retain the *Form* of it; to see Family Worship neglected, Sabbath-time trifled away, Bibles and good Books seldom look'd into, Religious Conference forgotten and quite laid aside, Solemn Assemblies indifferently attended, and the Word preach'd carelessly heard; 'tis sad to see how little there is among us of the pious Zeal and Strictness of the good old *Puritans*; how the things that remain are ready to die, and our *Works* are not found filled up before God; but what a woful Deficiency there is of what *should be*, and a woful Degeneracy from what *has been* among Professors.

And if this be a *Sorrow*, surely it may well be reckon'd *Sorrow upon Sorrow*, when those are taken away by Death, in whom so much of serious Piety was kept up, and by whose Means we might hope to see it, through the Grace of God in some measure *reviv'd*; it adds to our Grief, to see a Family *beheaded*, and by that means *broken up*, and *scatter'd*, in which God's Name was so constantly call'd upon, his Word read  
and



and open'd, and his Praises sung; now when in so many Houses the Altar of the Lord is broken down, or gone to decay. When we have been bewailing the Defection and Backsliding of many that began in the Spirit, then to follow those to their Graves, who not only still held fast their Integrity themselves, but we hoped might have been instrumental to reduce and recover those that were gone astray. This may well be call'd, *Sorrow upon Sorrow*.

3. The Contempt cast upon the Religious Assemblies which we adhere to, and in which we think we have met with God, is our Sorrow. It is made the Character of those whom God hath distinguishing Favours in reserve for, that they are *sorrowful for the solemn Assembly*, to whom *the Reproach of it is a Burthen*; and a great many solemn Assemblies there are among us on which we have reason to say, God has put Honour, that yet are loaded with Reproach, and exceedingly filled with the Scorning of those that are at ease. The Assemblies of those that we know to be united by Holy Faith and Love to Christ, and through him to his Church, are reproach'd as by Schism cut off from the Church, and therefore from Christ and the Covenant, and the Hope of Salvation, for no other reason but because their Ministers were ordain'd as Timothy was, by the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery, and not by a Diocesan Bishop. The Assemblies of those that we know to be peaceable and quiet in the Land are reproach'd without any Colour of Reason, like the Assemblies of the Primitive Christians, as factious, and seditious, and hurtful to Kings and Provinces. The Masters of those Assemblies, tho' we know them to be ready and mighty in the Scriptures, skilful in the Word of Righteousness, yet are reproach'd by many as unlearned and ignorant Men. Many such as these are the Reproaches of the Solemn Assemblies, which are our Sorrow, because when thus like Nazareth they are put into an ill Name, unthinking People are prejudiced against them, and are easily perswaded that no good thing can come out of them. There is a late Reproach

proach put upon our Assemblies by the Law, which makes it highly penal for one in any Place of Trust or Power to be seen in them: And this Reproach adds to our Burthen; *Hear, O our God, for we are suspected, we are despised, and both causelessly; and this is our Sorrow; we quarrel not with those who give us this hard Treatment, we pray God to forgive them; but as a Sword in our Bones are these Reproaches.*

Neh. 4. 4.

Psal. 42.  
10.

And now to have those taken away that were so much the Glory of our Assemblies, and help'd to answer them that reproach'd us, and to put to Silence their Ignorance; to be stript of our Ornaments now, of those whose good Report of all Men made them a Credit to us, even our Enemies themselves being Judges, this is Sorrow upon Sorrow; for we know not what to say when we are ask'd, what will ye do now? Where is your Glory? But that, *Our God is still our Glory, our everlasting Glory.*

4. The Judgments of God that threaten our Land, and the difficult trembling Posture of the Affairs of the Protestant Churches abroad are our Sorrow; it grieves us to see the Desolations of the Sanctuary, to hear the Groans of God's Israel in Egypt; by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small? and his Interests neglected? The Enemies of the Reformed Churches are many and mighty, and violent against them; their Friends few and feeble, and cool towards them. It is our Sorrow that there are such Heats and Ferments among our selves; we have reason to fear the Desolations which a Kingdom divided against it self is threaten'd with: we are biting and devouring one another, widening Matters in Difference, and exasperating one another's Spirits; Firebrands, Arrows and Death are thrown about, and Discord among other Tares sown in God's Field; all that wish well to the Honour of Christ, and the Interests of his Kingdom among Men grieve to see it.

And is it not then Sorrow upon Sorrow, at this time to have one removed from us that was and would have been a Peace-maker with God by his Prayers, that stood

stood in the Gap as an Intercessor, to turn away his Wrath: that had an Interest in Heaven, and improv'd it for a sinful People; that was and would have been a *Peace-maker with Men* too, by his Christian Temper and Moderation, that study'd the things which make for Peace, that placed his Religion in the Essentials of it, and there spent his Zeal. Now the *dividing Spirit* so much prevails, 'tis sad to lose one that was of such a *healing Spirit*. Now so many are bringing Oil to our Flames which is our Sorrow, 'tis *Sorrow upon Sorrow* to see the Hand wither'd that was bringing Water to them, and the Earthen Vessel broken that held that Water. 'Tis ill with the Patient if when his Disease is at the height, those Physicians are remov'd that best understood his Case, and the Method of his Cure.

Let us now make some Application of this;

First, See *what this World is*; it is a *Vale of Tears*; it is a *Bochim*, a Place of Weepers, and we must expect no other but a sorrowful Passage through it. 'Tis well if in Christ we have *Peace* and *Joy*, in the World we must have *Trouble* and *Grief*. In the upper World there is a perfect and perpetual Serenity, 'tis all clear and calm there; but in these lower Regions the *Clouds* are still returning after the *Rain*, and we must expect *Sorrow upon Sorrow*. Look which way we will, and we see the *Tears of the Oppressed*, some upon one Account, and some upon another, and many times they have no Comforter. We see Families in Tears, Congregations in Tears, Churches, Nations in Tears; how melancholy is the State of Human Life! What a constant Series of Grievs are we attended with through this Wilderness? The End of one Trouble is commonly the Beginning of another, *Deep calls unto Deep*. Nay, Troubles often come in Company, and the Beginning of one is the Preface to another, and we are not to think it strange; it is what others have had *Experience of*, and we have had notice of.

Eccl.4. 1.

The larger our Acquaintance is, and the more Friends

*A Sermon Preach'd at the Funeral*

Friends we have, the more happy we think our selves, and we have cause to do so, what greater Pleasure or Comfort is there on Earth than an *Agreeable Friendship*? And yet the more we have of this Comfort, the more Sorrow we are expos'd to; the more dear Friends we have, the more we have to *sympathize with*, and the more we have to *part with*; if it adds something to our Pleasure that we *rejoyce* with those we love when *they rejoyce*, it adds more to our Pain, that by the same Rule we *weep* with them when *they weep*; but considering how many more Mens Griefs are than their Joys in this World, and that in both we must be Partakers with our Friends, we must conclude that by the Increase of our Friendships, our Joys rise not in proportion to our Griefs, unless that we conceive a secret Pleasure in contributing something towards the Comfort of our afflicted Friends and their Families, by our sincere and affectionate Sympathy with them.

And is this World so full of Sorrows, *Sorrows upon Sorrows*, as we see it is, what is there in it that should court either our *Love to it*, or our *Stay in it*? Why should our *Affections* be set upon good things beneath, when we see them liable to so many sorrowful Changes? Why should they not be set upon good things above, which tho' they may perhaps admit of an *endless Increase*, yet know no *Change*; nor are in any Danger of being lost? Why should we be fond of a Continuance here, where the longer we stay, the more Sorrows we shall have to share in, and not rather covet to remove to that World, whence Sorrow is for ever banish'd, where all Tears shall be wiped away from our Eyes, and *Joy upon Joy* shall draw out the Bliss parallel to the Line of Eternity it self.

*Secondly*, Let one Sorrow help to make another Sorrow that *comes with it* the more tolerable, and to prepare and fit us for another that may *come after it*. As the more we do for God, the more we may do, one Duty will fit us for another; so the more we bear from God, the more we may bear, and the better we may



may bear it; for *Tribulation works Patience*. Those Rom. 5.4. that have not known Sorrow, find it hard to be reconcil'd to it, and are apt to fret at it, and to double it by *struggling* with it; but those who have experienc'd *Sorrow upon Sorrow*, like their Master who was a *Man of Sorrows*, and acquainted with Grief, can converse familiarly with their Afflictions, whereby not only the Terror of them is taken off, but abundance of Advantage is gain'd by them.

Let the frequent Returns of our Sorrows keep us from Security, and keep up in us a lively Expectation of Trouble, that let it come never so suddenly it may be no *Surprize* to us. We must never say, Surely this Trouble will *excuse* us from another, or that now we have had *our Share*; no, 'tis still less than what we *deserve*, and perhaps less than what we *need*; we should rather argue, Have I had this Sorrow? What good Use shall I make of it, that by it I may be the better prepar'd for the next! If our Sorrows wean us from the World, and loosen our Hearts from it; if they make us serious and thoughtful of another World; if they *endear* Christ to us, and make him more precious, by giving us an Experimental Acquaintance with the Powers and Pleasures of his Grace; then when *Sorrow comes upon Sorrow* we may bear it chearfully; *Patience works Experience*, and *Experience a Hope that makes not ashamed*.

And if we thus improve our Sorrows, tho' as to the *Troubles themselves* of this present time, we must remember that we are but *girding on the Harness*, and must not boast as tho' the *Warfare were accomplish'd*, and we had *put it off*, yet as to any real Hurt or Injury that the Troubles can do us, we may boast as tho' we had *put off the Harness*, for in all these things, not only we *shall be*, but we are already *more than Conquerors* through him that *loved us and died for us*.

Thirdly, When God pursues one Sorrow with another, let us follow the *Sorrow for Affliction* with a *godly Sorrow for Sin*, and that's a *Sorrow upon Sorrow* which will be an Evidence for us that the Affliction

D

comes

comes from Love, is designed for our Good, and doth us the Good that is designed us; and will prepare us for such a Deliverance out of our Affliction, as will be a Mercy indeed to us.

When we *sorrow* for the Death of our Friends, particularly of our Ministers, we should at the same time sorrow for our Sins, by which we have provok'd God thus to contend with us. We are therefore depriv'd of the Comfort of our Relations, because we have not done the Duty of them, when therefore we lament the Effect we should lament the Cause:

2 Chron.  
28. 22.

*Fourthly*, When we have *Sorrow upon Sorrow* upon the Account of Affliction, let us not by our own Folly add any more *Sorrow* to it; nor by the Productions of the Root of Bitterness in our Hearts, make the bitter Cup to be more bitter to us than really it is. If in any Distress we *trespass yet more against the Lord*, as that King *Ahaz* did, we make the Distress more than double. *Sin upon Sorrow* will be worse than *Sorrow upon Sorrow*; and will be *Wormwood* and *Gall* in the *Affliction* and *Misery*.

Phil. 1.  
27.

Now you here have *Sorrow* for the Death of your Minister. If you should grow cool to Holy Ordinances, as if your Religion were bury'd with your Minister, or as if no other Minister could teach you, and shew you the way to Christ and Heaven now he is gone; if this should be made use of as a Pretence for your Carelessness and Lukewarmness in the Service of God, that you have not the Minister you have been us'd to, and so your Hearts be hardened by the Providence that should soften them, then it will indeed be *Sorrow upon Sorrow*. But I hope better things of you, (my Brethren) and that we shall yet have Joy concerning you; that as those who have been so well taught, and so long under the Inspection of such an Overleer, you will continue your Zeal in Religion, and your Love and Unity among your selves, and we may hear of your *Affairs*, that your *Conversation* is as becomes the Gospel, and that ye stand fast in one Spirit, with one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel.

*Fifthly*,

*Fifthly*, Let us study to *answer God's End* in visiting us thus with *Sorrow upon Sorrow*, and *accommodate our selves* to the Intentions of these Providences. By the *Sadness of our Countenances* on such Occasions as these, let our *Hearts be made better*, every way better: Every Rod hath a *Voice*, which we are concern'd to hear, and understand the meaning of; every Affliction is sent upon an Errand, and he that sends the Errand expects to have an Answer; what Answer will you return this Day to this Messenger? Or rather to God's Call by it.

This Sorrow is appointed us, this *Sorrow upon Sorrow* to put us upon considering the Uncertainty of the Continuance of our Opportunities; yet a little while *John 12. 35.* is the *Light with us*; Places have their Time for enjoying the Gospel which will come to an end, and then other Places have their turn. Ministers are *burning and shining Lights*, but it is only for a Season that we *rejoyce in their Light*; which is a good Reason why we should walk and work while we have the *John 9. 4. 16.* *Light*, while it is yet called to Day, because the Night comes, and before the Night comes wherein no Man can work.

It is designed to bring us off from looking at Men, and Instruments, as tho' by their own Power they could do us Service, or had done it; no, they are only the *Earthen Vessels* in which the Treasure was deposited, and they are broke and thrown aside, to give us a sensible Conviction, that the *Excellency of the 2 Cor. 4. 7.* *Power is of God*, and not of them. We are thus taught to cease from Man, from wise and good and useful Men, whose Breath at their best State is in their Nostrils, and will not be there long; let our Dependance therefore be not on them, but on Christ, who makes them that to us that they are; let us sit down with Delight under the Shadow, not of these Gourds, that come up in a Night, and perish in a Night, but of that *Rock of Ages* that abides for ever. Let us not bind up our Religion and the Comfort of it in our Ministers, for God therefore shews us the End of their

Heb. 13. 7, 8. *their Conversation among us, that we may cleave so much the closer to Jesus Christ, who is the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever, and will be the same to the Successors in the Ministry that he was to their Predecessors, and make them the same to us, if it be not our own Fault.*

*Sixthly, Let us be earnest with God in Prayer that he would not proceed in his Controversy with us, and that we may not have any more Sorrow upon Sorrow of this kind. Go forth to meet the Lord in the Way of his Judgments, and humble your selves under his mighty Hand, and pray and seek his Face. He expects his praying People should now appear in the Breach to turn away his Wrath; and justly wonders if at such a time there be no Intercessor; and shall not each of us then be Intercessors, as the Prophet Ezekiel was, when*  
 Isa. 59. 16. *he fell upon his Face, and cried with a loud Voice, as one in earnest, Ah, Lord God, wilt thou make a full End of the Remnant of Israel? And as the Prophet Amos was, when he pray'd, O Lord God, cease I beseech thee, by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small.*  
 Ezek. 11. 13.  
 Amos 7. 5.

*O that by this Providence we might be stirr'd up to pray more, and pray better, to pray more earnestly, as Christ himself did when he was in his Agony. When we have lost a praying Friend we are concern'd the more to pray for our selves. Pray that the Light of God's Countenance may shine upon us through these dark Dispensations, and that whatever Friends and Helpers he takes away from us, he would not himself turn away from us, nor take away his Mercy and his Truth.*

*Seventhly, Even then when we have Sorrow upon Sorrow, yet let us not sorrow as those that have no Hope; but take hold of the Comforts and Encouragements which God hath provided for his own People, in their multiplied and most aggravated Sorrows, that they may not be unmixed Sorrows and unallay'd. As the Righteous have Hope in their Death, so have their Friends also that are left behind in Tears.*  
 1 Thes. 4. 13.



1. We have Hope concerning him whom we have lost, *that he is remov'd unspeakably to his own Advantage*, for to those to whom to live is Christ, to die is not only *no Loss*, but great *Gain*. *This Country* has a mighty Loss of *him*, but he has no Loss of *it*, who is gone to the better Country, that is the *Heavenly*, to better Work, and better Pleasures, and better Friends. Those are safely and honourably lodg'd that are receiv'd into the Mansions in our Father's House, those Everlasting Habitations; those have a good Repose, and sleep sweetly that *sleep in Jesus*. What Honours here are comparable to theirs, to whom our Lord Jesus saith, *Well done, good and faithful Servant*; or what Pleasure comparable to theirs who enter into the Joy of their Lord. Let this yield us *pleasing Thoughts* when we are *afflicting our selves* for the Loss of one we lov'd. We sorrow for the Body, that that is lodg'd in a Land of Darkness and Silence; but the Soul is the Man, and that's gone thither where its Eyes are open'd to an Everlasting Light, and its Lips open'd in Songs of Everlasting Praise; and therefore *if we loved him we would rejoyce*. He who so often complain'd of knowing but in part, and prophesying but in part, is now made perfect, and sees *Face to Face*. Mat. 25. 21. John 14. 28.

2. We have Hopes that God will do our Souls good by this Providence, that he will sanctify it to us, and make it a means of our Sanctification; and that the Impressions of it will not be soon lost, will never be quite lost. You of this Place and Neighbourhood will, I hope, be quicken'd hereby to consider your latter End, and with the utmost Diligence to prepare for it. You see, that in the midst of Life we are in Death, and that we are often obliged to remove hence upon very short Warning. When you saw your Minister last in the Pulpit, and heard him discourse so excellently of the Intercession of Christ, you little thought it was the last Sermon you should hear him preach, and that within a few Days you should see him laid in the Dust; but so it proves; and God by it calls aloud to you, *Therefore be ye also ready, be ye always ready, for you see*

## A Sermon Preach'd at the Funeral

see that at such an Hour as you think not, the Son of Man comes.

And as this Providence will I hope through Grace do you good, by quickening you to *prepare for Death*, so I hope it may be of use to you to help you above *the Fear of Death*; those that are ready to die should be willing to die, and they have the more reason to be so, when they see their Friends go chearfully before them down into the darksome Valley of the Shadow of Death, and even then *fear no Evil*. Your Ministers that while they liv'd, shew'd you the way to Heaven through the Paths of Life, when they die shew you the way thither through the Regions of Death, and go before you through that *Jordan*, as the Priests did before *Israel* bearing the Ark of the Covenant. Be ye therefore followers of them, who are now through Faith and Patience inheriting the Promises.

2 Sam. 6.  
20. 3. We have hope, that God will take care of the Be-headed Family, that is most sensibly touch'd by this Breach. He was one that bless'd his Household, that was every way a Blessing to it, and therefore his Death is killing to that; we sorrow with them, and grieve for their loss; but we depend upon the Word of God, that he will be a Husband to the Widow, and a Father to the Fatherless Children; *Jehovah jireh*; The Lord will provide; and in the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen; the Orphans that are left with him, shall not be left by him, not left comfortless, but he will come unto them, and take care of them; and let the Widow trust in him, and she shall not be made ashamed of her Hope. To the aged Mother likewise, who has liv'd to see Sorrow upon Sorrow, God will be better than ten Sons, than ten such Sons.

Gen. 22.  
14.

4. We have Hope, that God will provide well for the Congregation, and that that shall not be destitute and dispersed, as Sheep having no Shepherd, but they and their's shall still be led into the Green Pastures, and fed beside the still Waters. You have been loving and respectful to your Minister, and many of you have been his Comfort and Hope, and I trust will be his Crown of

of rejoicing in the Day of the Lord; and you have reason to expect that God will send you another faithful Guide in the good Ways of the Lord. I have reason to think he has a Blessing in reserve for you, by which he will carry on his good Work among you. St. Paul when he was in Prison comforted himself with this, that *tho' he was bound, the Word of the Lord was not bound*; and when faithful Ministers are laid in their Graves this may be our Comfort, *tho' they are buried, the Word of the Lord is not buried*. When you change your Minister you do not change your Master; you shall have another Preacher, but thanks be to God not another Bible, or another Gospel.

5. We have Hope, that *tho' we have parted with a dear Friend in Sorrow, with many such in Sorrow upon Sorrow, yet the Day is coming when we shall meet again, shall meet with them all again in Joy, in everlasting Joy*. The Hope of this gives the strongest Al-  
lay to our Grievs. *If in this Life only we had hope in Christ, and were to fetch our Reliefs in such Cases as these, from within the Confines of Time, we were of all Men the most miserable*; but we have hope in Christ, that those who now *sleep in him*, he will shortly *bring with him*; and will bring us to meet them; we which remain and are left behind for a while, shall be brought to be *Companions with them in the Kingdom*, as we have been in *the Patience and Tribulation of Jesus Christ*. We look for *the Resurrection of the Dead, and the Life of the World to come*, and in the believing Expectation thereof we comfort our selves, and one another.

Now God calls to Weeping and Mourning, it is a Comfort to us to see so many sad Countenances and wet Eyes in this solemn Assembly, for thus we answer God's Calls; but when God calls us to Joy, into his Joy, what a pleasant sight will it be to see the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, and our selves in it, and not one weeping Eye, or dejected Countenance, or sorrowful Spirit among all the Holy Myriads; there shall be no Sorrow, nor any occasi-

on for it; nay, there shall be Everlasting Joy, and Everlasting Cause for it. The Streams ever-running, because their Springs ever-full and over-flowing.

Our Assembly is now *breaking up* and *scattering*, and it is not likely we should ever be all together again in this World; but this is our Comfort, if we be found the faithful Followers of the Lord Jesus, we shall shortly be *gathered together* unto him, with all the Saints, and none ~~but~~ Saints, and Saints made perfect: And that Assembly shall never be *broken up* or *scatter'd*; we shall meet and *part no more*. The best we can here hope for is, to *go in and out* with the Sheep of Christ, and to *find Pasture*; but if we can but get to Heaven, we shall be *Pillars in the Temple of our God*, and shall *go no more out*. The Lord bring us all safe thither in due Time; and in the mean time the Lord watch over us, *The Lord watch between us, when we are absent the one from the other.*

John 10.

2.

Rev. 3. 12.

Gen. 31.

49.



*A Short Account of the Life of Mr.  
Samuel Lawrence.*

**H**E was born in *Wem*, a little Market Town in *Shropshire*, in the Year 1661, and as appears by the Register, was baptiz'd Nov. 5. that Year. He was the only Son of Mr. *William Lawrence* and *Sarah* his Wife; his good Mother is yet Living; his Father was a very eminent Christian, and much respected and valued by all good People that knew him. My Father preach'd his Funeral Sermon at *Wem*, Feb. 26. 1694. on *Luke 23. 28. Weep not for me, but weep for your selves, and for your Children.* Whence he shew'd, that when a good Man dies, there is no Reason we should weep for him, but there is Reason we should weep for our selves. Certainly (said he) this was a good Man, and is manifest in the Consciences of you all, and of all that knew him, that he was so; weep not for him therefore, for his Death is an Out-let to all the Evils of this World, and an Inlet to all the Happiness of the other World.

Looking over my Father's Notes of that Sermon upon this occasion, it has so affected me, that I must beg the Reader's Pardon, if I insert the Heads of it, the Subject being so near a kin (tho' I little thought of it) to mine at the Son's Funeral.

" It is said of *Abel*, that being dead he yet speaketh.  
 " If our deceased Friend and Brother who is dead  
 " could be heard speaking, this is that he would say,  
 " My Dear Wife and Children, my Dear Brothers  
 " and Sisters, and other Relations, my dear Neigh-  
 " bours and Friends, *Weep not for me*, for you have  
 " something else to do with your Tears, bestow them

E

" there

*A Short Account of the Life*

“ there where they will turn to a better Account,  
 “ weep for your selves. But why not for thee, dear  
 “ Husband, Father, Brother, Friend, why not for  
 “ thee? Did we not love thee? You did, and for that  
 “ very reason *Weep not for me.*

“ For, (1.) Consider the Evils I am freed from. I  
 “ had a sickly crazy Body, especially towards my *la-*  
 “ *ter end*, wearisom Days and Nights were appointed  
 “ to me; what would I have given many a Time for  
 “ an Hours Rest; but now all this is at an end; I  
 “ shall be no more sick; no more pain'd, my Head  
 “ shall now ake no more, and are you sorry for this?

“ I had my share also of Losses and Crosses in my  
 “ worldly Affairs; I had one House burn'd over my  
 “ Head, and almost all that was in it, in a few Mi-  
 “ nutes, and have had the Care and Trouble of build-  
 “ ing and furnishing another; but now farewell all  
 “ such Cares. And are you sorry for this?

“ You know that as long as I was able I was labori-  
 “ ous in my particular Calling, I never eat the Bread  
 “ of Idleness, but of honest Diligence: But now all  
 “ that Toil is over, I am got to Bed, where I rest  
 “ from my Labours, from all my Labours of that  
 “ kind, never to return to them again, and will you  
 “ grieve for this?

“ A great deal of Pains I have taken in travelling to  
 “ and attending upon Holy Ordinances, on Sabbath-  
 “ days, on Week-days, sometimes above and beyond  
 “ Strength; but I am now where I have Communion  
 “ with God at the Spring-head, without the Conduit-  
 “ Pipes of Ordinances, and will you grieve for this?

“ You, all of you have, and I doubt not but some of  
 “ you feel from a *Body of Death*, I am sure I did,  
 “ and many a Time it made me cry out, *O wretched*  
 “ *Man that I am*; you know what I mean, the cor-  
 “ rupt Nature, the carnal Mind, the Sin that dwells  
 “ in us, a proneness to Evil, a backwardness to Good;  
 “ but Death has eas'd me of that Burthen, when the  
 “ Breath went out of the Body, that indwelling Sin  
 “ went out of the Soul, when the House was pull'd  
 “ down, there was an end of the Leprosie that was in the  
 “ Walls;

“ Walls; what all the Praying and Hearing, the Sabbath and Sacraments, the Care and Watchfulness of Forty Years would not do, Death has done at one blow. *Weep not for me then.*

“ I had daily Grief in my Heart for my own Sins, for the Sins of others, and for the Afflictions of my Friends, and for the Troubles of the Church of God, but now all Tears, even those of godly Sorrow are wiped away from mine Eyes, therefore let none be in your's upon my Account.

“ And lastly, the Bitterness of Death is past with me, I have shot the Gulf, that last Enemy, that Son of *Anak* is vanquish'd, and I am triumphing. *O Death where is thy Sting, and therefore weep not for me.*

“ But this is not all, (2.) If you consider the Happiness I am enter'd into, that fair Palace into which Death was but a dark Entry, you would not weep for me, but rejoice rather.

“ Would you know where I am! I am at home in my Father's House, in the Mansion prepar'd for me there! I am where I would be, where I have long and often desir'd to be; no longer on a stormy Sea, but in a safe and quiet Harbour; my working-time is done and I am resting; my sowing-time is done, and I am reaping; my Joy is *as the Joy of Harvest.*

“ Would you know how it is with me? I am made perfect in Holiness; Grace is swallow'd up in Glory; the Top-stone of the Building is brought forth.

“ Would you know what I am doing? I see God, I see him as he is, not as through a Glass darkly, but Face to Face; and the Sight is transforming, it makes me like him. I am in the sweet Enjoyment of my Blessed Redeemer, my Head and Husband whom my Soul loved, and for whose sake I was willing to part with all; I am here bathing my self at the Spring-head of heavenly Pleasures and Joys unutterable, and therefore *weep not for me.* I am here keeping a perpetual Sabbath, what that is, judge by your short Sabbaths; I am here singing *Hallelujahs* incessantly to him that sits upon the Throne, and

*A Short Account of the Life*

“ rest not Day or Night from praising him!

“ Would you know what Company I have? Blessed  
 “ Company, better than the best on Earth; here are  
 “ Holy Angels, and the Spirits of Just Men made per-  
 “ fect; I am set down with *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and  
 “ *Jacob* in the Kingdom of God, with blessed *Paul*,  
 “ and *Peter*, and *James*, and *John*, and all the Saints;  
 “ and here I meet with many of my old Acquaintance,  
 “ that I fasted and pray’d with, that got before me  
 “ hither.

“ And, lastly, will you consider how long this is to  
 “ continue; ’tis a Garland that never withers; a  
 “ Crown of Glory that fadeth not away; after Milli-  
 “ ons of Millions of Ages, it will be as fresh as it is  
 “ now; and therefore *weep not for me*.

“ ’Tis true, the Body must turn to Rottenness and  
 “ Putrefaction, the Worms must feed sweetly upon  
 “ it, but that also sleeps in Jesus; it still remains uni-  
 “ ted to him, and shall shortly be raised again incor-  
 “ ruptible, like the glorious Body of Jesus Christ,  
 “ more glorious than the Noon-day Sun.

“ But tho’ you have no reason to weep for him that’s  
 “ gone, you have abundant reason to *weep for your*  
 “ *selves, and for your Children*.

“ Weep for your Sins, the Cause of this and all  
 “ your other Grievs; that’s the right Channel for your  
 “ Tears to run in. O that I knew what to say, to  
 “ make Sin bitter to you this Day! Shall I tell you  
 “ it kills your Friends; it kill’d your Saviour; it  
 “ threatens to kill your Souls.

“ Weep for your Loss, the loss of a godly Neigh-  
 “ bour; a good Member of your Society, a praying  
 “ Member, and a profitable One; every way useful  
 “ among you. I cannot say he loved your Nation,  
 “ and built you a Synagogue; but he found you one  
 “ when you needed one; his House was your Syna-  
 “ gogue, his Doors, his Heart were open to you.

“ Weep for your Children that are coming into a  
 “ tempting troublesome World, and going abroad in-  
 “ to it; weep for your selves that are yet in the midst  
 “ of it, cumber’d, tempted, absent from the Lord.

“ Weep



“ Weep for the Evil to come upon your selves and  
 “ your Children, which the taking away of such Men  
 “ is a threatening Omen of.

“ But is there not something else to be done besides  
 “ weeping? There is: We must acknowledge the  
 “ Hand of God in the removal of such Men; must be  
 “ thankful to God that we had them so long; must  
 “ search and try our ways and turn again to the Lord;  
 “ weep and pray for our selves and our Children;  
 “ weep and prepare to follow; weep and hope; and  
 “ if thus we sow in Tears, we shall shortly reap in  
 “ Joy, Everlasting Joy.

These were the Heads of what my Father enlarg'd  
 upon in that Sermon; and the reading of it affected  
 me the more, because it was but the Year after, that  
 it became applicable to himself; and Mr. *Talents* when  
 he preach'd my Father's Funeral Sermon, made menti-  
 on of Mr. *William Lawrence's* Death, and spoke very  
 respectfully of him.

But to return to our Subject from which we too soon  
 digress'd; his Father's Elder Brother was Mr. *Edward*  
*Lawrence*, an eminent Minister in *Shropshire* first, and  
 afterwards in *London*. A Man of great Integrity, and  
 a substantial judicious Preacher; who to keep the  
 Peace of his Conscience left a good Living, and threw  
 himself, and his numerous Family upon Divine Pro-  
 vidence.

His Book of *Christ's Power over Bodily Diseases*, has  
 been and will be of great use to many for their Comfort  
 in Sicknes, and their Improvement of it. This Ne-  
 phew of his in many Things resembled him much,  
 and the Comfort he had in him was the more valued  
 by him, because of the great Grief he had in some of  
 his own Children, which he let the World know some-  
 thing of in a Book he publish'd, call'd, *Parents Groans*  
*over Wicked Children*. He dy'd in *November 1695*.

Having given this Account of his Family and Rela-  
 tions, we come next to give some Account of his  
 Childhood and Youth, as we have it from those that  
 then knew him. He was betimes inclin'd to Learn-  
 ing, and was very mindless of the Sports and Toys that  
 Chil-

## *A Short Account of the Life*

Children usually are addicted to. When he was very little his Parents sent him to School, more to be out of the way of Danger, than in Expectation he would learn any thing; but before they were aware he had learn'd his Letters, and by the Years End could read very well in his Bible. So intent was he upon his Book, that his Parents would hire him to Play for a while, but he would presently return to his Book.

Much sooner than most Children do he enter'd upon his Learning of the Latin Tongue, at the Free School in *Wem*, under Mr. *Roderick*, and his two Ushers; at a Time when that School flourish'd much. There he made such Proficiency when he was very young, and advanc'd so fast that his Masters lov'd him, and others admir'd him. The Time that most of his School-fellows spent in Play he spent in reading; and was so earnest in pursuing Learning, and so careful to perform the Exercises of the School, that he would scarce allow time to dress himself.

His Master Mr. *Roderick* removing, and another coming in his place, who did not take so much Pains, our young Scholar complain'd to his Parents, that he was not forwarded in Learning as he had been, and therefore desir'd he might be remov'd to *Newport*, where there was at that time a flourishing School under Mr. *Edwards*; and he was so, and there improv'd very much in his Learning.

His Inclinations to Piety were as early as his Inclinations to Learning; and he was not only free from the common Follies and Vanities of Childhood and Youth, but was forward to the Exercises of Devotion. He began betimes to pray in Secret, and would be up early to redeem Time for it. So much seriousness and conscientiousness appear'd in him in his Childhood, that some who knew him then would say they thought he was sanctified from the Womb.

After he had got what Learning was to be got at *Newport-School*, he spent some time under the Inspection of my Father at *Bread-Oke*, and some with Mr. *Tallents* at *Shrewsbury*; and a considerable time he spent with some other hopeful young Men under Mr. *Malden*

Malden at *Alkinton* near *Whitchurch*; where he improv'd himself very much in *Greek* and *Hebrew*. He continued there till Mr. *Malden's* Death in *June 1681*.

Soon after that he was sent up to *London*, where after some little time spent with his Uncle, he was put under the Tuition of that famous Instructor of Youth Mr. *Charles Moreton*, whose private Academy at *Newington-Green* flourish'd very much at that time, and was a Nursery of many that have since done worthily, and been famous in their Generation. There he went through a Course of University Learning, and carried himself so as to gain the respects of all that observ'd him.

There he stay'd till the Iniquity of the Times forc'd Mr. *Moreton* to break up his Academy, and to remove himself for Safety and Liberty to *New-England*, as many such Men were necessitated to do in the Last Age.

When he left Mr. *Moreton*, he was recommended to Mr. *Singleton*, to be Assistant to him in teaching a Grammar School in *Clarkenwell* Close, and was very acceptable both to him, and to the Relations of the young Gentlemen that were his Scholars.

After he had spent 2 or 3 Years there, he was recommended to the Lady *Irby*, Relict of Sir *Anthony Irby*, who liv'd in *Dean's Yard* in *Westminster*, to be her Domestick Chaplain; when she first saw him, he was so young, and look'd so much younger than he was, that she ask'd what! Have they sent me a Child for my Chaplain; but upon Trial she soon found he was no Child in Understanding. A great deal of Love and Respect, he gain'd by his prudent-pious Carriage in that Family. Upon his first coming thither, when some of his Friends spoke with Concern for him, how he would have Courage, being young and modest, to go through his Work, and were afraid he would be dash'd; when, as often, there were Persons of Quality present at their Family-worship; he said it did not at all affect him, for *He had a Greater Presence to mind than theirs*.

While he was at my Lady *Irby's*, the Liberty for *Dissenters* commenc'd in 1687. and a Door of Opportunity was open'd to them, just 25 Years after it was shut

shut by the Act of Uniformity; and soon after the opening of it was legally confirm'd upon the Revolution. And it has been kept open 25 Years, and blessed be God, no Man has been able to shut it. Upon the setting up of the Meetings publickly then, Mr. *Lawrence* began to preach, and frequently assisted Mr. *Alsop*, on Sacrament Days, and upon other Occasions, his Meeting lying very near to my Lady's; and his first Performances in that Work were very acceptable.

One thing I must here take Notice of to his Honour; (and 'tis the more so, that notwithstanding my great Intimacy with him at *London* at that time, I do not remember ever to have known it till now, that I am acquainted with it by his surviving Relations) his Father had his House and Goods burn'd in that dreadful Fire, which consum'd the whole Town of *Wem* in *March 1674*. The Rebuilding and Refurnishing of it was a great Expence to him; notwithstanding which he brought up his Son to Learning, which the Son had such a grateful Sense of, that as soon as ever he came into a Capacity of maintaining himself, and with frugal Management of sparing something, all he could spare before he marry'd, he sent to his Father, amounting at times to a very considerable Sum. He was one that had learn'd according to the Apostle's Rule, to show Piety at home, and to requite his Parents. Those that knew him well, have said they wanted Words to express his Respect to his Parents, and Love to his Relations.

In the Year 1688. he came down into the Country to see his Relations; and a Society of Dissenters in and about *Nantwich* in *Cheshire*, being then in quest of a Minister, after several Motions made to them had miscarried, desir'd Mr. *Lawrence* to come and spend a Lord's Day with them, which he did to their great and universal Satisfaction; so that they unanimously chose him to be their Minister; and after some time taken to consider of it, and consult his Friends, he accepted it; but went first to *London* to take leave of his Friends there. The Lady *Irby* was extremely loth to part with her Chaplain, and was very angry with Mr. *Baw-*



ter and my Father for perswading him to go to *Nantwich*. But thither he came in *September* that Year. In the Beginning of *November* following he was publickly ordain'd to the Ministry by a Class of *Lancashire* Ministers at *Warrington*; Six more were ordain'd at the same time. Mr. *Crompton* preach'd, and Mr. *Risely* gave the Exhortation. I remember the Time by a good Token, for when we were there at *Warrington* we received the News of the Prince of *Orange's* landing.

He is now settled at *Nantwich*; and some there will remember *what manner of entring in he had among them*; with what Wisdom, Industry and Zeal he applied himself to his Work, and how many precious Souls he was instrumental of Good to, what a *free Course* the Word of the Lord there had, and how it was glorified. His greatest Encouragement there was at first; but he continued there to his Death. Tho' if he had had Bodily Strength, and a Voice proportionable to his other Ministerial Abilities, his Friends would have remov'd him into a larger Sphere of Usefulness.

He preach'd constantly twice every Lord's Day, Winter and Summer, and read and expounded the Scriptures in order both parts of the Day, the Old Testament in the Morning, and the New in the Afternoon; and catechiz'd the Children every Lord's Day, Winter and Summer, except Sacrament Days.

He constantly administer'd the Lord's Supper once a Month with great Solemnity and Seriousness. The young People that were admitted to that Ordinance, did before the Congregation renew their Baptismal Covenant in that Form which my Father drew up, which is in his Life, I take God the Father to be my Chief Good and Highest End; I take God the Son to be my Prince and Saviour; God the Holy Ghost to be my Sanctifier, Teacher, Guide and Comforter. I take the Word of God to be my Rule in all my Actions; and the People of God to be my People in all Conditions; I do also give, devote, and dedicate my whole self to God, all I am, all I have, and all I can do. And this I do, deliberately,

berately, sincerely, freely, and for ever. And some he afterwards advis'd to write it over, and subscribe their Names to it; which he said he would keep as a Witness against them if they proved false to it. He liv'd to admit many to the Lord's Supper, whom he had himself baptiz'd in their Infancy.

He preach'd every *Saturday* about Noon; 'tis the Market-day; and so he gave an Opportunity to the Country People of spending an Hour for their Souls in the midst of their Worldly Business.

In baptizing Children, he generally receiv'd the Child from the Parent's own Hand, and return'd it to him again, with a solemn Charge to bring it up in the Fear of God, and the Faith of Christ; and frequently took occasion to declare that he did not baptize into a Party, but into the Church of Christ.

He spent some time with the Communicants on the *Friday* before every Sacrament, to assist them in their Preparation for that solemn Ordinance; and was very ready to visit the Sick and Afflicted, and to assist the Families of his Friends in accommodating themselves to the Providences of God that were concerning them.

He was a very solid serious judicious Preacher; his Discourses were generally short, but pithy and substantial, and well study'd. His Doctrine drop'd as the Dew, and distill'd as the small Rain; and he preach'd as one that truly aim'd at the Edification of those that heard him, and was in Care to make them wiser and better.

When he began his Ministry at *Nantwich*, that he might preach the more profitably, he resolv'd to preach in a Method, that his Hearers might see Divine Truths in their Order and Connexion with each other; he therefore enter'd upon a Body of Divinity, and preach'd it over largely, which took him up many Years; when he had finish'd that he preached over most, if not all of our Saviour's Parables; after that went over many practical Subjects, as the Mortification of Sin, Living by Faith, &c. And towards the latter End of his Time, when most of those were dead

dead that were his Hearers, when he first came, and many young ones were grown up, he began to preach over a Body of Divinity the second time; but study'd every Sermon anew, nay, not so much as looking on his old Notes, saying, He would not have his Master find him idle. He was in great Care not to flag and grow remiss in his publick Performances; and would desire some of his Hearers that were judicious, to tell him, if they observ'd any Alteration for the worse in them.

He was one that lov'd his Work, and his Heart was in it. He was forward to embrace all Opportunity of doing good. He frequently preach'd Lectures on Week-days in the Country about; and Funeral Sermons many times *gratis*. He often preach'd when he labour'd under bodily Indispositions, which made the Work very difficult, but would have serv'd many a one for an Excuse from it. When some advis'd him to consider his Strength and forbear Preaching, he said, He would use what Strength he had in his Master's Work, and did not desire to live a Day longer than he might do him some Service. It is not remember'd that of all the time of his being at *Nantwich*, which was near 24 Years, he was ever taken off from his Work till the last Sabbath of his Life, by the Sicknes of which he dy'd; and then when he was so weak that he could scarce be help'd out of his Bed, he said he hoped through the Goodness of God, he should be able to do his Work the next Sabbath, for said he, *It is my Delight*; but before that Sabbath came he was remov'd to better Work.

Tho' he was thus diligent in all the Parts of his Work, yet he was so far from glorying in it, that he sometimes express'd himself thus, *O what Reason have I to be humbled that so much of my time runs wast, which I can give but little Account of; and that I do no more in the Service of God; but (saith he) it is a comfort to me, that I do any thing.*

Once being much fatigu'd with his Work upon a Lord's Day, he lamentingly said to those about him, *O how poorly do we serve and praise God, but it's a Pleasure*

*A Short Account of the Life*

*to think that we shall shortly do it better in Heaven.*

He was much concern'd for the Success of his Ministry; and sometimes was dejected and cast down, because he saw not People so much affected with it, and wrought upon by it as he thought they had been formerly, tho' it was observ'd, that towards the latter End of his Ministry he grew rather more lively and affectionate in his Performances.

The irregular Walking of any of his Hearers was a great Grief to him, and went near his Heart, and he would often sadly lament it in publick, that the Lives of many who are called Christians, are such a Reproach to that worthy Name by which they are called; and that the Professors of this Day came so far short of the Strictness and Seriousness of those he had formerly known.

He was faithful to those under his Charge in giving private Admonitions, as there was occasion. He had an excellent Faculty of giving Reproof, with Authority and Gravity, and yet with Meekness and Humility. He flatter'd none in any thing that was amiss, but where he thought it proper, freely told People of their Faults, but therein govern'd himself according to the Rule of that Scripture, which I remember he preach'd an excellent Sermon upon, above 20 Years ago, at a Meeting of the *Cheshire* Ministers, *2 Tim. 2.*

*24. The Servant of the Lord must not strive.*

The Tendency of his Preaching was to bring People to Christ and Heaven; to Heaven as their End, and to Christ as their Way. He said to one of the Lambs of his Flock, *Well, I hope you learn Christ, I preach Christ as plainly and well as I can;* he us'd this Argument to perswade People to lay up their Treasure in Heaven, *If our Treasure be on Earth we are going from it, if it be in Heaven we are going to it.*

He discharg'd his Duty as the Master of a Family, conscientiously and well; where he had a Tent, God had an Altar, on which the Morning and Evening Lamb were duly offer'd; and with the burning of the Incense in Prayer and Praise, the Lamps were lighted in the reading and expounding of the Scriptures; he

was



was also constant in singing Psalms with his Family. The Sermons he preach'd in publick were repeated in his Family, and a great deal of Pains he took to teach his Children and his Household the Way of the Lord, and to make Religion and the Service of God pleasant to them.

His whole Conversation in the World was blameless and harmless, and without Rebuke, and like *Demetrius*, he had a good Report of all Men, and of the Truth it self. He was of a peaceable Spirit, bearing and forgiving; and if sometimes a Provocation ruffled him a little, he soon recovered himself with such a Thought as this, *What have we Grace for but to enable us to practise those Duties, which are most cross to Flesh and Blood.*

He was a very good Scholar, and very communicative of his Knowledge; and delighted even from his Youth in that *Communication* which was good, and to the Use of Edifying. He was one of those *Wise Men* that not only lay up Knowledge, but use it aright, and whose Lips feed many. He had a peculiar Dexterity, which I have often admired in him, and been ready to envy him, in drawing on Discourse with young Scholars, that he might have Opportunity of giving them Instruction, which was always pertinent, and without Affectation.

The Year before he dy'd he was providentially drawn in, as I may say, (partly by having a Son of his own at home with him after he had been some time at *Glasgow*, and partly to gratify two or three other very hopeful young Men, who came and tabled near him in the Town, for the Benefit of his Conversation) to read *University Learning*, both Philology and Philosophy, and he not only took great Delight in it, but made it to appear, as did the Proficiency of those he read to, that he was well qualified for it, as I always thought him to be. And this made his Death to be *Sorrow upon Sorrow*, that we lost one who was not only an excellent Minister himself, but was just then beginning to be useful in training up Ministers; and what he did he did *gratis*.

He

*A Short Account of the Life*

He constantly attended the Meetings of the *Cheshire* Ministers twice a Year, and was much belov'd and respected by them; was often chosen Moderator, and his Advice in any Matter hearken'd to as much as any one's.

In his Non-conformity he was considerate and conscientious; he was so far from being determin'd to it by Custom and Education, and from being prejudiced in its Favour, that if he could have been satisfied with the Lawfulness of Conformity, he would gladly have conform'd; and he was tempted to it by some good Preferment offer'd him in the Church, which would have been more than double or treble to his temporal Advantage; he study'd the Point with the greatest Impartiality imaginable; but he could not conform without wronging his Conscience: and therefore chose rather to suffer than to sin. But in his Non-conformity he always express'd himself with great Moderation, and a truly Christian Temper, and was very careful to preserve his Hearers from Heat and Bigotry, and to possess them with Principles of Catholick Charity.

He was much confirm'd in his Non-conformity, by the late Act against Occasional Conformity; and tho' he did not use to meddle with such things in the Pulpit, yet upon Occasion of that Act, preaching then in course of *Christ's Kingly Office*, he said, *That was it which the Dissenters were bearing their Testimony to; and so it is; for they believe that tho' the Church has a Judicial Power to see that the Institutions of Christ be observ'd, and kept pure and entire, like the Power of the Judges and Justices in the State, yet a Legislative Power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, like that of the Sovereign and Parliament in the State, is the Prerogative of our Lord Jesus; and that no Man or Company of Men in the World has any such Power.*

It was but the Day before he fell sick of his last Sickness, that he happen'd in Discourse to fall upon the Question of Non-conformity, and he express'd his Admiration and Lamentation, (as the Learned Dr.

*Whitby*

Whitby doth in his *Protestant Reconciler*, whom he re-  
ferr'd to) That the Peace of the Church should be  
broken by the Imposition of that which the Imposers  
themselves acknowledge not to be necessary, nor re-  
quir'd by Christ or his Apostles; and that the Impo-  
sition should be continued with an inflexible Resoluti-  
on not to part with those indifferent things, which  
they cannot but own they might lawfully do, when it  
would put an end to that which they call a damnable  
Schism, and so (in their Judgment) prevent the E-  
verlasting Ruin of thousands; surely (saith he) never  
were precious Souls so under-valued.

Thus he stood fast in the *Christian Liberty*, where-  
with Christ has made us free, and witness'd against  
Impositions in the things of God, tho' his Constancy  
herein was much to the Prejudice of his Secular Inte-  
rest; and he would sometimes say, *If our Cause be not  
just and good, surely we are the greatest Fools in the  
World.* But yet in the things that are *Cesars*, no  
Man press'd more the Duty of Subjects to the Pow-  
ers that God hath set over them. He usually ob-  
serv'd the 8th of *March*, the Day of the Queen's Ac-  
cession to the Crown, and took that Occasion to  
preach of the Mercy of Government, and particu-  
larly of the Government we are under, and to press  
People under it to *live quiet and peaceable Lives in all  
Godliness and Honesty.*

The Afflictions he met with he was careful to get  
good by; they are sent (so he wrote to a Friend on oc-  
casion of a pressing Trouble he was under) to soften  
a hard Heart, to humble for Sin, the procuring Cause  
of them; to quicken us in our Duty; to shew us the  
Vanity of the World, to mind us of our own Death,  
and quicken us to prepare for it; if sanctified they  
are wholesom to us; O that these Ends may be at-  
tain'd; that our Grievs may have this kindly Work  
upon us; that one Affliction may fit us for another.

He liv'd in a lively Apprehension of Death ap-  
proaching; and kept up such a constant Expectation of  
it, that sudden Death was no Surprise or Terror to  
him. Nay he sometimes pleas'd himself with this  
Thought,

Thought, that at Death he should go to see and enjoy God, and to admire him in all his Works of Creation, Providence, and especially Redemption, which (said he) I shall then see in the Light of Eternity.

Many other things worthy of Notice might be said of him, but I shall here add nothing more, only that he *finish'd well*. Tho' he had no strong Constitution at all, yet he enjoy'd a good State of Health for the most part; on Lord's Day, *April 13*, he preach'd on that Branch of Christ's Priestly Office, *Seeing he ever lives making Intercession*; and exerted himself with more than ordinary Vigour and Liveliness; so that some of his Hearers took notice of it, and ask'd him when he had done how he bore that Day's Work; little thinking it was his last.

The *Wednesday* following he sicken'd of a Fever; which at first did not seem at all threatenng; on the Lord's Day he said he hoped he should be able to preach by the next Lord's Day. He had very good Advice and Assistance; but that Night the Distemper seiz'd his Head; and he was sometimes delirious; but when he spoke what was foreign and incoherent, yet it shew'd that his Heart was in Heaven; for in his *Deliriums* he would pray, and sometimes in *Latin*.

When he had his Understanding, he said, he had good Hope through Grace that he should go to Heaven. And some of the last Words he was heard to say were, *I do not fear, I do not fear*. He dy'd the 9th Day of his Fever, on *Thursday, April 24, 1712*, about ten at Night, in the 51st Year of his Age. He was buried in the Chancel of *Nantwich Church* the *Monday* following, and was followed to his Grave by a great many true Mourners.

He left behind him a sorrowful Widow, and three Sons by his first Wife, and two Daughters by his Second, and a dear and tender Mother, in the 80th Year of her Age. And many good Friends he left behind in a Vale of Tears, but is himself gone to a World of Everlasting Joy.

F I N I S.

